

## WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**COMMITTEE: TOURISM**

**DATE: JANUARY 31, 2013**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS MERLINO  
KENNY  
DICKINSON  
STRAINER  
CONOVER  
WOOD  
VANSELOW

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR  
PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER

PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISORS BENTLEY  
FRASIER  
MASON  
TAYLOR  
WESTCOTT

MICHAEL R. SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER

CHRISTINA CURLEY, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE  
REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND CONVENTION & VISITORS  
BUREAU

DAVID BULMER, WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS

LUISA CRAIGE-SHERMAN, LAST OF THE MOHICANS OUTDOOR DRAMA, INC.

FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY

DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 10:15 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Mr. Merlino welcomed all of the Committee members back for the new year and added he was pleased to have retained the same members as last year.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kate Johnson, Tourism Director, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.* Ms. Johnson also welcomed the Committee members back for the new year.

Commencing the agenda review, Ms. Johnson requested to amend Resolution No. 792 of 2010, which authorized agreements with various companies/agencies for brochure distribution, in order to add The Chamber of Southern Saratoga County in the amount of \$1,350 and to decrease the amount paid to HA-PE-DE from \$2,570 to \$1,220. She explained that HA-PE-DE would no longer handle the brochure distribution at Exit 9 on the Northway.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Ms. Wood and carried unanimously to amend Resolution No. 792 of 2010 as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15, 2013 Board meeting. (Subsequent to the Committee meeting it was determined that it was not necessary to amend Resolution No. 792 of 2010 as there were agreements already in place with both vendors.)*

Ms. Johnson requested to amend the Warren County Tourism Policy concerning publication of advertisements to include the following verbiage under Section IIIB:

*Special events taking place in Warren County and open to the public (including, but not limited to, sporting events, festivals, carnivals, community garage sales, fishing tournaments, cultural/performance events, conventions, races, educational and agricultural events and programs).*

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to amend the Warren County Tourism Policy as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15, 2013 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested a contract with Digital Press to print 105,000 copies of the 2013 Rates and Dates and Events Brochure for a term commencing February 20, 2013 and terminating March 29, 2013 in an amount not to exceed \$10,852 to be paid upon completion of the project. She noted Digital Press had been the lowest bidder of the four companies that responded to the Request for Proposal.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Digital Press as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 15, 2013 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson presented a request for a transfer of funds in the amount of \$1,000 from the Salaries-Part-Time Code (A.6417 130) to the Telephone Code (A.6417 423) to reflect the cost of 4G Mobile Broadband service for internet access at the Tourism Information Center in the Adirondack Outlet Mall. Mr. Kenny asked if there was a computer available for use by the public and Ms. Johnson replied the staff used the computer to search for information upon request. She added there was also a printer available so the staff member could print out information for members of the public. Mr. Conover asked if there was Wi-Fi access available to the public and Ms. Johnson replied affirmatively. Mr. Merlino remarked he had visited the Tourism Information Center and he felt the Department had done a good job in establishing it.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds as outlined above and forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the Request for Transfer of Funds form is on file with the minutes.*

Peter Girard, Creative Director, played the 30-second Winter TV Commercial for the Committee members. Ms. Johnson informed the commercial had aired on both cable and network stations and a one minute version of the commercial was available on Video on Demand. She said the Winter Getaway Contest was the highlight of the commercial and included four packages which contained overnight hotel lodging. She stated the commercial had aired in Metro New York (New Jersey, Westchester, Long Island and Western Connecticut), Albany, Hudson Valley and Montreal. She noted in Canada there was a Board which reviewed all broadcast commercials prior to airing. It had been necessary to modify the commercial, she continued, to remove the portion in which it appeared that alcohol was being toasted in order to receive approval for broadcast. She commented the glasses actually contained fruit juice and the deleted portion of the commercial was replaced with a holiday shopping segment. She commented the commercial had garnered in excess of 6,900 leads which surpassed the number of leads from last year's commercial. Mr. Girard displayed various Winter print ads for the Committee members and Ms. Johnson circulated some publications in which ads had been placed.

Ms. Johnson mentioned there were twenty high traffic locations on the New Jersey Transit Rail System where the Winter Poster had been placed, as part of the Department's out-of-home advertising efforts and examples of the posters were displayed. She noted the posters included the logos for Gore Mountain, Hickory Hill and West Mountain Ski Resorts, as well as the logo for the Saratoga-North Creek Railway (SNCR) and the Warren County Tourism Department's QR (Quick Response) Code. She reported three New York State Thruway Rest Area locations had kiosks, (Sloatsburg, New Baltimore and Plattekill), which contained a static advertisement next to a video screen which played the Warren County Tourism Department Winter Video at least 60 times within a 24 hour period. She commented the Winter Brochure and Travel Guide were also on display at the kiosks.

Ms. Johnson apprised the Committee members about the Winter Mid-Week Lodging Deals which had a feature button on the Warren County Tourism website homepage. She mentioned six properties had offered mid-week lodging deals this year: The Alpine Lodge in North Creek; The Fern Lodge in Chestertown; the Copperfield Inn in North Creek; The Georgian Lakeside Resort in Lake George; Landon Hill Bed & Breakfast in Chestertown; and Sleep Inn & Suites in Queensbury. New this year, she continued, were images from the properties which were included on the website. She noted the Winter Mid-Week Lodging Deals had been featured in an email blast on December 5, 2012.

Ms. Johnson expounded the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, of which Warren County was a member, produced a snowmobile campaign which included a video. Mr. Girard played the snowmobile video for the Committee members. Ms. Johnson commented the video had been a partnership between Franklin, Hamilton and Warren Counties and had been aired as a commercial in the Rochester, Central Pennsylvania, Hudson Valley and New Jersey broadcast area and geo-targeted Facebook ads had been completed, as well. She noted the campaign included an Adirondack Snowmobile Trail Map which she circulated to the Committee members; *a copy of the map is on file with the minutes*. She commented four Warren County properties had participated in snowmobile packages for December, January and February weekends: Ridin' Hy Ranch in Warrensburg and The Georgian Lakeside Resort, The Fort William Henry Resort and The Holiday Inn Resort in Lake George. She added almost 2,200 leads had been fulfilled from the snowmobile commercial.

Ms. Johnson stated the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council had about 120,000 subscribers to their email blast list. She added Warren County participated in about four of these email blasts each year. She mentioned an email blast in January for Winter Events for which the theme had been to promote Winter Carnivals. She noted Hickory Ski History Festival, Brant Lake Winter Carnival, Hague Winter Weekend and all four weekends of the Lake George Winter Carnival had been promoted.

Ms. Johnson said distribution of the 2013 Travel Guide had begun in October 2012 and was now available on CD; *a copy of the 2013 Travel Guide is on file with the minutes*. She circulated several publications in which advertisements had been placed and Mr. Girard displayed samples of various ads for the Committee members. Ms. Johnson advised they were in the process of working on the Summer Placemats. She said Robert Blais, Mayor of the Village of Lake George, had commented the font size on the placemats was too small due to the many events and activities in the summer. As a result, she continued, a decision had been made to produce two Summer Placemats in order to increase the font size and still highlight all of the events and activities.

Ms. Johnson stated the consumer shows had begun for 2013 and Mr. Girard displayed a list of the 2013 Consumer Shows to the Committee members. She commented that local properties were offered an opportunity to participate in the consumer shows via brochure distribution for a nominal

fee of \$25 per show. She added brochures were distributed for the individual Towns and Chambers of Commerce free of charge. She mentioned the Department also participated in shows through the New York State Travel and Vacation Association via brochure distribution. She said three Military Shows in New Jersey had been added to the Consumer Show list. She pointed out the Plattsburgh Chamber of Commerce had asked to distribute some of the Warren County brochures at the Montreal RV (Recreational Vehicle) Show, in turn Warren County would distribute some of their brochures at the Suffern RV Show.

Mr. Girard displayed images of the Tourism Information Center for the Committee members. Ms. Johnson said comments had been positive and she noted they tracked the number of visitors, the weather and the visitor comments. Mr. Girard displayed the Fishing & Boating Map for the Committee members; *a copy of the map is on file with the minutes*. Ms. Johnson noted a page on invasive species had been added to the map and included the Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers logo. She reported the Office collected a large amount of data and received and filled requests for data on a regular basis. She said they completed lodging demographics, an annual occupancy survey and two conversion surveys following the summer and winter campaigns; *a packet containing various data collected is on file with the minutes*.

Ms. Johnson advised that "I ♥ NY" was completing their marketing campaign and Governor Andrew Cuomo had been a big part of the campaign. She said the campaign had hired new professionals that were focusing on Upstate New York. She reported the New York State Matching Funds awards were announced last week and Warren County would receive \$84,038 which was a 48% increase from the amount received in 2012. She informed of an article in *The New York Times* entitled "The 46 Places to Go in 2013" which had listed The Adirondacks in New York as number 21 and specifically highlighted Camp Orenda in Johnsburg and the SNCRR.

Ms. Johnson informed she had met with the Capital Region Economic Development Council pertaining to the Governor's Path Through History initiative. She said Janet Kennedy, of Lakes to Locks Passage, was seeking funding to produce a new Lakes to Locks Passage brochure which would include the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor. She commented that staff members had attended a meeting at the Lake George Association to inform of the ways Warren County Tourism was assisting in outreach efforts to stop aquatic invasive species. Mr. Dickinson interjected the meeting had included all of the groups with interest in stopping aquatic invasive species and had been scheduled by Dave Wick, Executive Director of the Lake George Park Commission. He noted the purpose of the meeting had been to discuss invasive species education which was the main component in stopping the spread of invasive species. He complimented the Tourism Department on the amount of literature that was produced and the quickness in which they responded to requests for information.

Paul Dusek, County Administrator entered the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

Ms. Johnson apprised there had been a lot of communication pertaining to the Governor's proposed Adirondack Whitewater Challenge and she hoped an official program and outline would be in place soon. She advised the Quarterly Newsletter would be emailed on February 21, 2013 and the 2012 Year in Review Binder would be presented at the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Conover asked if the results of the Occupancy Tax Survey were available on the Warren County Tourism website and Ms. Johnson replied in the negative. Mr. Girard clarified there was a link included in the Quarterly Newsletter which would lead to the Occupancy Tax Survey results which were on the Tourism website on an area which was not accessible to the public. Ms. Johnson said it would be possible to add the results of the survey to the Warren County website.

Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, distributed copies of the Group Tour Update to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes*. She said she selected four niche groups each year which were targeted for specific outreach and this year she had selected: international/ethnic groups (with an emphasis on Asian groups); shopping groups; camp & music directors; and bank club directors. She reviewed her plan of action for each group as outlined on the Group Tour Update.

Ms. Brand reported her intention to attend 18 Group Tour Shows in 2013, four of which she had not attended in the past. She advised some of the shows had been selected in order to learn more about the four niche groups selected for 2013. She apprised that local facilities were offered an opportunity to have their brochures distributed at upcoming Group Tour Shows at a nominal cost of \$25 per show. She reported the 2012 Group Tour Survey had been distributed to over 75 facilities and the results of the Survey would be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Brand informed of the purchase of an Apple iPad to be used during her appointments at the Group Tour Shows. She said Mr. Girard had downloaded the Group Travel Planner in PDF format onto the iPad which allowed her to show particular points of interest during the appointments. She noted the iPad was easier to use during the appointments than the binder she had previously used. She stated a one-minute Group Tour Video had been created which gave a quick overview of what the area had to offer. Mr. Girard played the Group Tour Video for the Committee members. Ms. Brand mentioned a new Student/Youth Profile Sheet which had been created to promote tour opportunities for students and listed the available venues for performance groups; *a copy of the Student/Youth Profile Sheet is on file with the minutes*. She explained the Profile Sheet had been created to allow her the ability to review the youth oriented attractions when meeting with representatives of student/youth groups.

Ms. Brand informed the American Bus Association (ABA) Conference had gone well this year and she predicted an increase in tour buses in 2013. She said Warren County had been well represented at the ABA, as there had been representatives from the following businesses: Lake George Steamboat Company; Surfside on the Lake; The Georgian Lakeside Resort; the Saratoga-North Creek Railway; the Country Inn & Suites and the Hampton Inn & Suites. She said the ABA Foundation had conducted a 2012 Economic Impact of the Motorcoach Industry Study and she circulated the results of the Study for New York State and the New York Congressional District to the Committee members; *copies of same are on file with the minutes*.

Ms. Brand said the Group Loop Electronic Newsletter was distributed in November to 9,363 contacts. She added they were currently working on the February Newsletter. She mentioned the most viewed links on the November Newsletter had been the Winter Brochure and the Lake George Winter Carnival. She advised she had conducted a 30-piece mailing to select ski clubs on the east coast which highlighted ski opportunities in the area and winter recreation and transportation to and from Gore Mountain via the SNCRR. Ms. Brand pointed out the Tourism Information Center was featured on Destinations of New York's Electronic Newsletter as the "What's New" in the Adirondack Region.

Ms. Brand informed of the Teddy (Roosevelt) Rides Again event on September 13-15, 2013. She mentioned the Town of North Creek would plan activities in connection with the event, such as a parade. She advised that Pathway Tours & Productions had announced a Gaither Gospel Group performance at Saratoga Performing Arts Center on May 28-29, 2013. Ms. Brand reviewed a list of direct successes for group tours as outlined on the Group Tour Update. She circulated various print ads to the Committee members.

Mr. Girard displayed the 2013 Whitewater Rafting Brochure to the Committee members; *a copy of which is on file with the minutes*. He advised they had requested the Whitewater outfitters to submit

images and the response had been positive. He stated four email blasts had been released since the last Committee meeting and he displayed images of the email blasts to the Committee members. He said the Arts & Culture email blast had been released on October 16, 2012 to approximately 136,000 subscribers and was opened by about 12,000 people. The Winter Getaway email blast, he continued, had been sent to approximately 140,000 subscribers and was opened by about 14,000 people. He stated the Winter Activities email blast had been released on December 5, 2012 to approximately 140,000 subscribers and was opened by about 11,000 people. He noted The Ski Season Has Arrived email blast was released on January 10, 2013 to approximately 142,000 subscribers and was opened by about 7,500 people. Mr. Girard displayed the schedule of email blasts for 2013 to the Committee members and reminded them that up to three businesses could sponsor each email blast by including their logo and a link to their website.

Mr. Girard displayed images of the Tourism Information Center and the materials that were created for displays there. He pointed out the two televisions in the corner continually played the Four Season video and the three Video on Demand videos on a loop. He displayed an image of the Glens Falls Civic Center floor which now contained the Warren County Tourism logo. He advised a three-minute video entitled "A Fun Day of Skiing" had been created and was available on the homepage of the website. He played a segment of the video for the Committee members and reminded them that he was able to pull still images from the video for use in print ads.

Mr. Girard apprised a Fishing Packages button had been added to the feature bar on the homepage of the website and linked directly to the fishing packages offered by local properties. He displayed the new Fishing Photo Gallery on the website to the Committee members and reviewed the various updates to the website with them. He noted the Department had started collecting additional winter images. A brief discussion ensued.

Christina Curley, Special Events Coordinator for the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), distributed copies of her January 2013 Monthly Report to the Committee members; *a copy of the Report is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Curley apprised the monthly CVB meeting had been held at the Country Inn & Suites and there had been eight people representing seven properties in attendance. She noted the hoteliers were pleased with the number of Motorcoach Tours that had been booked for 2013.

Ms. Curley said she had conducted three site tours since the last Committee meeting. She commented the Empire Orienteering Club had toured four or five properties for their May 10-12, 2013 event and had selected The Surfside on the Lake for their host hotel. She added the Club would select one or two additional hotels for the overflow of attendees. Ms. Curley stated the United Church of God would not select the area for their 2013 event due to a scheduling conflict with the Adirondack Balloon Festival; however, she added, they had toured four properties for events in 2014 and beyond. The American Angus Association, she continued, had toured three properties and had selected The Sagamore Resort for their June 4-8, 2013 Board of Directors meeting.

Ms. Curley announced the CVB had joined Pinterest, a social media website where image boards were created by topic of interest. She explained the CVB was associated with the New York State Association of Destination Marketing Organizations on the website and "pinned" images to their board, as well. She said she had "pinned" images of the Adirondack Winery and Adirondack Brewery to the NYS Brews, Wines & Spirits board.

Ms. Curley informed the LeadingAge New York Foundation for Long Term Care would hold four separate conferences and properties had been presented to them for selection. Of the four

meetings, she continued, The Annual Director of Nursing/Services/Director of Social Work Conference & Expo would be held at The Sagamore Resort in November 2013 and 2014.

Ms. Curley said the Cadillac & LaSalle Club had made a presentation at the December CVB meeting for overflow properties for the 400 to 500 people anticipated to attend their July 8-13, 2014 Grand Nationals event. She mentioned proposals had been received from seven hotels for review by their Board. She said the decision would be made in the next few months.

Ms. Curley stated the Army Reserves Family Fun Day event had been considering the Lake George area for July 2013 but the event was cancelled. She said she had joined the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) and was registered to attend the Symposium on April 21-25, 2013 in Louisville, Kentucky. She advised she had already received leads from the NASC and was currently working on The BIG Tournament, the world's largest amateur charity golf tournament. She concluded by informing the Committee that the East Coast Snocross event had been successful.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Dickinson and seconded by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist